

I support media diversity

This letter is in reference to Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. If the FCC's goals truly include competition, diversity and localism, then I urge the commission to prevent further deregulation of ownership within the industry. An additional step in deregulation would not serve the public interest. It would only increase the market power of media conglomerates--a power which already compromises the values stated above.

I realize that the FCC has commissioned several studies attesting to the benefits and effects of deregulation. As a media researcher, I must clarify that these results are only partial and inaccurately reflect the bigger picture. Media deregulation has deleterious effects on message diversity. On the surface, more channels exist for the consumer. However, these channels do not represent a true diversity in terms of perspective. A single company can own such a large percentage of media outlets that independent voices can be, and often are, drowned by the corporate deluge.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding. I would also encourage the FCC to consider the possibility of further regulating media to a pre-1996 structure.

I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation and at times convenient to the public in order to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Maria A. Simone